

Letter to Parents

SOUND
WAVES

This year we will be using the Sound Waves program to support our teaching of spelling and reading. Sound Waves covers the Australian Curriculum and aligns with current scientific evidence about how children best learn to spell and read.

What will children learn through the Sound Waves program?

Sound Waves has two phases of teaching that run across the year. Children learn different knowledge and skills in each phase.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, children are introduced to the 43 sounds of spoken English. Each day, they are taught one new sound. They participate in a whole-class lesson on the sound, followed by lots of fun sound-based games and activities throughout the day.

This phase focuses on establishing children's ability to work with the sounds of language; they are not introduced to matching letters to sounds. Dedicating this time to teaching purely sounds is crucial for students' later spelling and reading success.

You can support your child's progress throughout this phase by asking them to teach you the catchy little Chant and Action for each new sound they learn.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, students learn how to represent the 43 sounds of spoken English using the letters of the alphabet.

Each day, they participate in a whole-class lesson where their teacher models forming letters, and spelling and reading words. These lessons are followed by fun hands-on activities in which children practise their new spelling and reading skills.

Lessons in this phase are taught in a very specific order to minimise confusion for students. At first, students learn to use a single letter for one sound. For example, they learn to read and spell words like *top*, *pin* and *hen*. After that, students learn that some sounds are represented by two letters. For example, they learn to read and spell words like *ring*, *fish* and *moth*. They also learn that some sounds can be represented in different ways. For example, they learn that the sound we hear at the end of *bee*, can be shown in writing using an **ea** like in *beach* or an **ee** like in *keen*.

This order of teaching ensures students are 'up and running' with the essential basics of reading and spelling by the end of their first year.

You can support your child's progress throughout this phase by listening to them read any word lists or home readers that they bring home.

Did you know?

We put small speech sounds together to produce speech.

Australian English is produced using 43 speech sounds.

Did you know?

English uses just 26 letters of the alphabet to represent 43 sounds in spoken language.

This mismatch between letters and sounds means sometimes more than one letter represents a sound. For example, the **ch** in *chin*, the **sh** in *ship* and the **ll** in *bell* are all two letters representing just one sound.